

Main Street Corridor Concept Study

Workshop Summary Report

Introduction

The purpose of the Main Street Corridor Concept Study is to create a “vision” for Main Street. Island County and the Freeland Community wants to create a more pedestrian-friendly Main Street and a corridor that helps to define the core of the community. Completion of the study will include alternative streetscape designs. Possible design solutions could include landscaping, driveway/access reconfiguration, sidewalks, pathways, mid-block crossings, curb bulb-outs/traffic calming, and other amenities to create a safe and desirable streetscape.

This outreach summary report provides a description of methods used and information gathered during the public involvement and community outreach efforts for the Main Street Corridor Concept Study. This report will describe the process used to develop the public outreach program, explains the exercises and activities used, and summarizes public input gathered.

The Importance of Public Involvement

Development of the Main Street Corridor Concept Study is shaped by a public outreach effort. In order to develop feasible design alternatives, opinions and suggestions from the public were highly considered. The general public, community stakeholders, and various interested groups and individuals were involved in the study process from the early stages of developing a vision and identifying potential concepts for Main Street.



Main Street, Retail Corridor

Outreach Methods

Throughout the study process, several outreach tools were used to inform the public about the study, as well as notifying people about meetings and open houses. Below is a list of outreach methods used for the project.

Project Information Sheet: The Project Information Sheet is a one-page, color informational sheet developed to provide a project description, schedule, meeting announcements, and contact information.

Press Releases and Calendar Notifications: Project and meeting information were distributed to local newspapers for publication.

Interactive Workshops with Stakeholder Groups: Stakeholder groups were invited to attend small, interactive workshop sessions. Stakeholders were grouped into categories of like-interests to allow for open and effective discussions.





Main Street, Commercial Corridor

General Public Meeting: An evening meeting was held for the general public and stakeholders not able to attend the day meetings. The typical format involved a brief presentation and activities to prompt participation. Participants were given ample opportunity to provide comments and ideas.

Open House: The open house will allow the public to view presentation boards with draft information and provide additional feedback and comments. Team members will be available to talk to participants one-on-one and answer questions as needed.

Meeting Announcement Mailer: A brief project description and meeting announcement flyer was mailed to area residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

Comment Cards: Handed out at the public meeting and open house, comment cards provide another means for participants to provide input on the project. Comment cards include contact information, the project email and phone number, and an address for mailing them after meetings.

Workshop Series

The first stage of outreach involved a three-day interactive workshop series from December 6-8, 2005. The process included focus-group workshop sessions and an evening public meeting. Over 75 people participated in these meetings, and additional groups and individuals continue to be involved in the process.

The focus-group workshop sessions were held during the day lasting 90-minute per group. Each workshop session included a brief project

presentation, two visioning exercises, and time at the end for questions and answers. The workshops were designed specifically to meet with stakeholder groups of varying interests including residents, businesses, property owners, and others.

The public evening meeting was held on December 7th at the Trinity Lutheran Church. This two-hour public meeting included the same presentation, exercises, and question and answer period as the focus-group workshop sessions.

Summary of Workshop Visioning Exercise

The Visioning Exercise was designed to lead participants through a brainstorming session, where they could imagine a preferred future for Highway Main Street. This exercise was done at each of the daytime focus-group workshops and the evening public meetings. Participants were assured there were no wrong answers and then presented with the following scenario:

“If you move away from Freeland and return 20 years later. Do you like what you see? Tell us what you are seeing.”

Participants were asked to take a few minutes to consider the question before the brainstorming session began. Each idea that was shared was written down on flip chart boards. Comments and ideas shared during the Visioning Exercise are summarized below.

Vision

- Retain “small town” character
- Landscaping/fully mature plantings, trees along Main Street
- Public art
- Transit stop improvements – pull outs
- On street parking on Main Street
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street – not too wide (6 feet)
- Use material that lasts and is cost effective



Workshop participants want to see transit improvements on Main Street

(concrete with accent pavers)

- Controlled driveway access
- Street amenities – Benches, Trash receptacles, Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Roundabout at the corner of Main and Harbor Ave.
- Mid-block crossings at certain locations
- Curb-bulb outs at intersections

Other Comments

- Freeland does not have a “theme” – let’s keep it that way
- Speed humps are a bad idea
- Community needs sewers
- Like the idea of bikelanes – ROW may be too narrow
- It would be nice to park in one place and shop/ walk along Main Street
- Look for areas to create “small parks” or “garden rooms”
- Avoid asphalt material for pedestrians
- Do not take away parking
- Like the idea of underground power lines – expensive
- Streetscape elements are important but minimal (not wide sidewalks, etc.)
- Need to consider maintenance of landscape – drought tolerant, native plantings
- Central “municipal” parking lot is a good idea

“Dot” Exercise

During the focus-group sessions and public meeting, participants were asked to place green and red dots on elements of a Main Street. Participants placed green dots on elements they liked and red dot on elements they disliked. There were seven boards that represented various elements of a Main Street. The elements included: Street Borders and Art, Crossings, Sidewalks, Pavement Types, Traffic Calming, and Street Furnishings.

Figures 1 and 2, at the end of this report, include the images that received the most green dots for each category. Figure 3 includes the images that received red dots.

In summary, people preferred narrow sidewalks (5-7 feet) that represented characteristics of rural areas. Participants did not prefer images with wide, urban sidewalks (12-15 feet). Participants favored simpler design treatments such as gray scored concrete with accent pavers. Participants did not favor the brick or brick-colored pavers: “these elements look too urban for Freeland”. Participants did like some street furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks. Participants indicated that they did not favor the “look” of the inverted bike rack (shown above) but would like some type of bike rack.

Participants also favored planting strips and curb bulb-outs as opposed to speed humps as a way of traffic calming. Images with a planter strip between the street and sidewalk received the most green dots. These planters provide the perception of a “narrowed roadway” thus calming the traffic. However, some people did not favor planter strips that looked “too uniform” such as the same tree or plants along the corridor. A variety of native, drought tolerant plants are preferred. Several people favored mid block crossings during the “Visioning Exercise” although images showing mid-block crossings received more red dots than green.

Next Steps

Following the Workshop Series, two options were prepared to reflect the “vision” of Main Street. The open house gives the community a forum to review all the comments from the Workshop Series as well as review the preliminary concepts. Following the open house, Island County and the consultant team will review all input provided on the preliminary concepts and perspectives of what the driver will see on the road. A final presentation to present the preferred alternative will take place in early spring 2006.

The final study will be available in late spring. Island County will seek funding to continue the project after the study is complete. It is unknown at this point if and when funding will become available. Further, the sewer project will also be considered in scoping and scheduling this road improvement project.

Contact Information

If you have any comments or questions regarding this project, please contact:

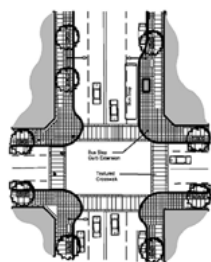
Joseph Araucto, Project Engineer
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(360) 679-7331

or

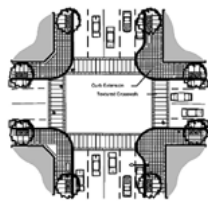
Jodie Vice, Project Manager
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(206) 224-7221
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Figure 1 - Most Liked Main Street Elements

Crossings



Curb Extension with Parking on Both Sides and Bus Stop



Curb Extension with Parking on One Side

Street Borders and Art



Pavement Types



Figure 2 - Most Liked Main Street Elements

Street Furnishings



Sidewalks



Main Streets



Traffic Calming



Figure 3 - Most Disliked Main Street Elements



Brick Pavers



Midblock Crossing



Urban Streetscape



Uniform Landscape



Speed Hump